



# *APD NEWS*

Public Information Office: (512) 974-5017

715 E. 8<sup>th</sup> St. Austin, Texas 78701

## **FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

**November 26, 2008**

**Contact:** Public Information Office, 974-5017

### **Austin Police Department Holiday Tips for Shoppers**

Tis the season to be jolly, but it's also the season to take extra precautions from auto thieves who shop the easy way by stealing gifts, purses, wallets, packages and other valuables left in plain view inside vehicles.

During the holidays, auto thieves scout mall and shopping center parking lots waiting for the opportunity to break into vehicles with items left in plain view. Within seconds, thieves can steal your items, identity and sometimes even your car. Texas drivers need to understand that leaving items in plain view for thieves makes their job much easier.

In 2007, auto thieves committed over 262,000 acts of vehicle burglary and stole over 94,000 vehicles in the state of Texas. In some jurisdictions, more than half of reported thefts occurred because vehicle doors were unlocked with the keys left inside.

Citizens need to be cautious during the holidays when looking for the best deals on the internet. The APD Auto Theft Interdiction has been working several cases in which citizens used the internet to purchase a vehicle or vehicle parts, only to find out they were stolen.

On Friday, November 28, 2008 from 12 p.m. to 5 p.m. the Auto Theft Interdiction Project and the APD Southwest District Representatives will be walking through the Barton Creek Mall parking lots looking for valuables that are visible through vehicle windows. They will place a "Crime Prevention Notice" under the windshield wiper to help educate owners about their need to protect against vehicle burglary.

- Take your keys – Nearly 20% of all stolen vehicles had the keys in them.
- Lock Your Car – Approximately half of all stolen vehicles were left unlocked.
- Park in well-lighted areas – Over half of all vehicle theft occur at night.



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- Never Leave Your Engine Running – It is against the law in Texas to leave your keys in the ignition or your vehicle engine running. If convicted, you can be fined up to \$200.
- Don't leave valuables in plain view – Don't make your car a more desirable target and attract thieves by leaving valuables in plain sight.
- When shopping on the internet know who your doing business with – do your research and ensure items are legitimate.

The APD Auto Theft Interdiction Project programs are funded through the Texas Automobile Burglary and Theft Prevention Authority to reduce auto and burglary theft in the State of Texas.

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